

CITY OF FLAGSTAFF

City Employee Directives

No. 4-080

Title: **CONTINUING EDUCATION AND TUITION
REIMBURSEMENT POLICY**

Effective: **11/20/98**

Revision: **March 7, 2016**

Contact: Office of Human Resources (779-7698)

I. PURPOSE

The City of Flagstaff is committed to “continuous learning.” With this concept in mind, the City provides a program to assist employees with the financial aspects of continued education which:

- encourages education,
- expands job knowledge and upgrades skills,
- helps employees meet the minimum requirements for City jobs,
- assists employees in completing college coursework, and
- prepares employees for other lines of work within the City.

In order to financially assist as many employees as possible, this is a shared responsibility between the employee and the City (since the City may not be able to reimburse all costs.)

II. TYPES OF EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

A) TUITION REIMBURSEMENT

1. Eligibility

- a. All tenured and exempt employees are eligible for reimbursement. Part-time tenured employees working 20 hours per week or more will be eligible for reimbursement on a pro-rated basis according to the number of hours worked. Temporary and probationary employees are not eligible for reimbursement.
- b. An employee must have worked for the City for a period of one continuous year. Temporary service does not apply toward the one-year period.

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2. Guidelines

- a. Reimbursement will only be made for coursework through an accredited college or university (including on-line coursework). An accredited college or university is one that is recognized by one of the following regional accrediting associations:
 1. North Central Association
 2. Northwest Association
 3. Middle States Association
 4. New England Association
 5. Southern Association
 6. Western Association
 7. Distance Education Accrediting Commission
- b. Courses must meet one of the following guidelines to be eligible for reimbursement:
 1. Non-Degree Seeking Students:
 - a. Individual college level course related to the employee’s current position or any position in the City, which the employee could reasonably aspire.
 - b. Individual college level course that is customer service focused.
 2. Degree Seeking Students:
 - a. Any class necessary to obtain a degree (must be related to the employee’s current position or to any position within the department.) If there is any question about the relation, EE should provide a written explanation.
- c. Employees may be reimbursed 100% (subject to the availability of funds) of eligible tuition fees up to twelve (12) credit hours per calendar year provided the employee receives a grade of “B” or better in the class. Employees who feel they are unable to earn a “B” or better due to a disability and would like to request a reasonable accommodation, should contact the Human Resources Director. The employee will provide a disability certification from the college or university and each request will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Maximum reimbursements will be equivalent to current Northern Arizona University (NAU) tuition rates. PASS FAIL COURSES ARE NOT COVERED...
- d. Employees will receive a stipend of \$75 per class for each course they receive tuition reimbursement. For example, if the employee is reimbursed for two courses, the employee will receive a stipend for \$150 total. The stipend is for incidentals not covered by tuition, such as books, parking,

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travel expenses and supplies, etc, and the employee will not be required to submit any receipts. Lab fees will be reimbursed separately.

- e. Employees must use personal time to attend class(es) unless prior approval has been granted by the Division Head or anyone to whom the Division Head has delegated responsibility.
 - f. Employees who receive financial assistance for their education from other sources (i.e. scholarships, grants, etc.) must disclose the source and amount on their Tuition Reimbursement Application. Based on the amount of financial assistance received, the City will adjust the tuition reimbursement.
 - g. In order to assist with budgeting, employees must declare in advance their intent to take classes and must receive approval prior to taking classes. If the employee does not obtain approval before the class starts, there is no guarantee that the request for reimbursement will be approved.
 - h. Funds for reimbursement will be deducted from the department’s budget and are subject to limits imposed by the annual budget.
3. Application Process
- a. Employees must submit a Tuition Reimbursement Application prior to the start of classes. Also submit course of study and COPY OF TUITION RECEIPT so we may estimate expenses (lab fees, other fees, etc).
 - b. The application will be routed to the employee’s supervisor, Division Head, Human Resources Manager, and City Manager for approval.
4. Reimbursement Process
- a. Upon completion of the class the employee must submit a copy of the approved Tuition Reimbursement Application, grade-slip showing a “B” grade or better for each class, and tuition receipt to their supervisor for processing. When applicable, state and federal taxes will be deducted.
 - b. The reimbursement will be processed through Accounts Payable and the employee will receive a separate check.
5. Repayment
- a. An employee that terminates employment must repay tuition reimbursements they have received within the last 12 months.

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- b. Payments will begin with the last paycheck and will be evenly distributed over a six-month period.
- c. If the employee’s last paycheck is distributed prior to Human Resources’ knowledge of the termination, repayment will be handled through the City’s billing process.
- c. After six months, any unpaid balances will be forwarded to collections and the employee will be responsible for the cost of the collection, including any attorney fees and court costs.
- d. Exceptions to the repayment requirement may be made for special circumstances (i.e. retirement). Exceptions may be granted through the Division Head, with recommendation of the Human Resources Director and final approval by the City Manager.

B) CERTIFICATIONS

- 1. Eligibility
All tenured and exempt employees are eligible. Temporary and probationary employees are not eligible.
- 2. Guidelines
 - a. Certification classes taken as a result of a job requirement will be eligible for pre-payment.
 - b. Employees should refer to Administrative Policy 4-027, Compensation for Travel and Time Spent at Training, in order to determine under what circumstances they will be compensated for attending training.
- 3. Application Process
 - a. Employees required to take a certification class through an independent training company should follow their division’s procedure for registering for the class.
 - b. Funding for classes will be deducted from the division’s budget. It is not necessary to submit a Tuition Reimbursement Application.
- 4. Payment Process
Classes will be paid directly to the institution with no pre-payment required by the employee.

5. Repayment
Repayment for training classes is not required by the employee.

C) TRAINING

1. Eligibility
All tenured and exempt employees are eligible. Temporary employees are not eligible.
2. Types
 - a. Computer Training
 1. Employees must submit a Training Enrollment Request to Human Resources.
 2. Human Resources will register the employee.
 3. The cost of the class is deducted from the Human Resources budget.
 4. Repayment is not required.
 - b. AGTS
 1. Employees must submit a Training Enrollment Request to Human Resources.
 2. Human Resources will register the employee.
 3. The cost of the class is deducted from the Human Resources budget.
 4. Repayment is not required.
 5. If the employee misses a class, his division will be charged a make-up fee.
 - c. Independent Training Classes
 1. Guidelines
 - a. Employees will be eligible for independent training classes at their supervisors’ discretion. These are classes offered through companies such as Career Track, Fred Pryor, and National Seminars Group, etc.
 - b. Employees should refer to Administrative Policy 4-027, Compensation for Travel and Time Spent at Training, in order to determine under what circumstances they will be compensated for attending training.
 2. Application Process

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- a. Employees aspiring to take a class through an independent training company should follow their division’s procedure for registering for the class.
 - b. Funding for classes will be deducted from the division’s budget. It is not necessary to submit a Training Enrollment Request.
3. Payment Process
Classes will be paid directly to the company with no pre-payment required by the employee.
4. Repayment
Repayment for training classes is not required by the employee.

III. ATTACHMENTS

- A. Tuition Reimbursement Application
- B. Training Enrollment Request

By _____
Josh Copley, City Manager

Dated: _____